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OF STATES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Note verbale dated 23 February 1999 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to draw his attention to the statement made on 20 February 1998 by the President of Belarus on Kosovo (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations would be grateful if the statement of the President of Belarus and the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

ANNEX

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the President of the Republic of Belarus on the development of the situation concerning Kosovo, issued on 20 February 1999

The Republic of Belarus is following closely the development of the situation concerning the conflict in Kosovo and at the negotiations in Rambouillet regarding its settlement. What is chiefly important at present is to preserve the negotiating process and to forestall any actions that might jeopardize it.

In this connection, any attempts to exert external pressure or dictates and, above all, the threat of the imposition of military strikes, are unacceptable and extremely counterproductive. The use of military force against the sovereign state of Yugoslavia will further impede and possibly even destroy the road to a settlement and will entail a further exacerbation of the crisis. It is a matter of exceptional importance that the search for ways to resolve this issue takes place on the basis of adherence to the Charter of the United Nations, and, in particular, the role of the Security Council.

In any case, an exclusively political and diplomatic process should be the basis for a settlement. The Belarusian side places a positive value on the actions of the Contact Group on Kosovo, which is playing a key role in the establishment of a dialogue between the opposing sides and in promoting the achievement of agreement in the negotiations.

The Republic of Belarus reaffirms the unshakeability of its position regarding a settlement of the Kosovo conflict, which should be based on unconditional adherence to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and to the principle of the non-use of force.

It is convinced that only strict adherence to these principles can guarantee a firm and lasting peace in Kosovo and be a factor contributing to the prompt restoration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in its rightful role as a full member of the international community.